



American Planning Association  
**Michigan Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

September 1, 2009

Representative Marie Donigan  
Michigan House of Representatives  
Chair, Intergovernmental and Regional Affairs Committee

Honorable Representative Donigan, and members of the House Committee on Intergovernmental and Regional Affairs

I am writing to support House Bill 5211, a bill to amend the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, which would require that local units of government within metropolitan statistical areas to consider the proximity of adequate public transportation as part of a site plan review process. As Michigan seeks to regain its economic prominence, more attention must be given to public transportation, and asking, minimally, that local land use decision makers consider public transportation when approving site plans, can go a long way to institutionalize the idea of public transportation as local government responsibility.

The site plan review process provides local government with the opportunity to consider transit connections; vehicular patterns; locations of near-by commercial goods and services, employers and schools. And while site access, safety, and connections will all be accomplished through a thorough site plan review process, more important such a review can provide local land use decision makers with a regional perspective on transportation systems, further expanding the reach of the impact. Limiting this to Michigan's largest municipalities also makes good sense. More importantly, requiring consideration of public transportation at the site plan review level increases awareness of the importance of alternative transportation systems, and in time could institutionalize transit policies at the local government level.

The Michigan Association of Planning also supports House Bill 5212, which would amend the Michigan Planning Enabling Act to consider public transportation facilities in master planning efforts. Mandating inclusion of public transportation systems as pertinent to the future development of a community will increase awareness of the importance of public transportation systems to the economy, to the environment, and to our social systems that seek to accommodate the elderly, disabled, and disenfranchised. Mandating consideration of transportation facilities will result in better planned and better connected communities.

Communities that are planned to include provisions for public transportation are seen as more desirable places to live and to do business. The following are benefits of a more expansive

219 South Main Street  
Suite 300  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

p: 734.913.2000  
f: 734.913.2061

[www.planningmi.org](http://www.planningmi.org)



view of transportation facilities, and of including transportation agencies in the review process.

- Senior citizens are able to age in place when appropriate public transportation systems exist
- Young professionals seek "where" they want to live even before they find employment, and the vast majority of this talent or creative class – many of whom are leaving Michigan in droves – seek quality places that provide alternative means to the automobile to get around. Public transportation, whether bus or light rail or other means – are a means to keep our college grads and attract others to Michigan.
- Energy costs and rising gasoline prices demand that alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle be explored and embedded in local planning policy
- Air pollution and green house gasses are reduced by reducing the number of vehicular trips
- Access to jobs for those unable to afford to buy, maintain and insure an automobile
- Access to employees for business
- Access to public transportation is a social justice and equity issue

Increased awareness about the importance of public transportation, and the value of planning for it, will result from requiring elected and appointed officials to consider transportation in its site plans and comprehensive plans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Andrea Brown'. The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Andrea Brown, AICP  
Executive Director